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**Poultry Discussions Successfully Concluded, U.S. Exports to Russia to Resume**

WASHINGTON - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman, Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans and U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced today that the long-running poultry trade dispute between the United States and Russia has been resolved. Both sides have agreed to a new veterinary certificate that will allow for the continuation of U.S. poultry exports to Russia.

"I am extremely pleased that we have successfully concluded the negotiations with Russia on the new veterinary certificate," said Veneman. "This agreement comes at a critical time for the U.S. poultry industry and will allow trade flows to resume with much greater certainty."

"The resumption of U.S. poultry shipments to Russia is good news for both U.S. industry and Russian consumers. We will continue to work with Russian officials to ensure rapid and effective implementation of this agreement," said Zoellick.

"This agreement moves the United States and Russia one step closer towards realizing our common goals of greater economic partnership and expanded trade between our two countries," said Evans.

Extensive talks have been underway for several months between both countries' technical teams in Washington and Moscow. A wide range of technical issues were addressed throughout the development of the new certificate, including testing requirements and procedures, inspection guidelines and process, hygienic requirements, and documentation and procedure.

Veneman, Evans and Zoellick commend the extraordinary efforts of all members of the U.S. negotiating team and expressed appreciation for the support they received from members of Congress. "This has been a long process that involved many meetings and discussions among officials in various parts of the government at all levels," they said.

The team included representatives from several federal agencies, including USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Trade Representative's

Office.

"The Russian market is extremely important to the economic viability of the U.S. poultry industry. Beyond this, we look forward to strengthening our cooperative relationship with Russia and to working together in many other important areas affecting our food and agriculture sectors," said Veneman.

Russia is the largest market for U.S. poultry exports, with sales last year exceeding one million tons valued at over \$600 million.

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